1948

FIRKA DEVELOPMENT (195 48) Department

SERIES.

G.O. No. 661

Dated 6.10.1948

[Despatch Abstract.]

Government Servant Conduct Rules--Broadcasting--Talk in English on "changing dietary habits" by Dr. B.C. Krishnan, Nutrition Officer--Permission to broadcast and accept honorarium--Granted.

CHANGES IN DIETARY HABITS.

Customs die hard. It is said that dietary habits die very hard. While these statements are broadly true, circumstances affecting the ways of life of human-beings lead to changes in dietary habits. Dietary habits are generally controlled by various factors like geography, hereditary habits, availability of food-stuffs in different areas, facilities for transport and other economic factors governing the life of the people. To-day, I deal only with changes as I find them in he dietary habits of the people in Madras Presidency as a whole.

During war and after, due to war and its consequences, the food situation in the country has been causing anxiety, sometimes of a very serious nature, to the people and their Governments. Pressure of increasing population on the land, freakishness of monsoons, stoppage of imports from other countries, the ascending cost of living, the growing tendency of agriculturists to cultivate commercial crops in preference to food crops and such other disturbing factors are bound to produce a change in certain settled conditions of food habits

Rice has been the major cereal in common use in this Presidency. It should be admitted that this Province does not produce all its requirements of rice. It used to import good quantities of rice from Burma and Siam. With the disappearance of these imports, the pressure on rice has increased proportionately. In addition, monsoonish conditions in the recent past have not been favourable. This necessitated a food-policy resulting in efforts to procure and distribute rice from within the Province as quickly as possible. In the Northern parts of the Presidency and to some extent among a certain section of the ~~XXXXX~~ orthodox in the Southern districts, raw rice has been the favoured one. In most of the Southern districts and in the West Coast, par-boiled rice ruled the day. In recent years, owing to food controls and to the necessity to rush supplies of rice to needy areas and reduce transport operations it happened many a time that the areas which relished par-boiled rice had to depend on raw rice and vice versa. This resulted in people getting accustomed to both raw and par-boiled rices.

Collection of correct ~~XX~~ and adequate information on the prevalent dietary habits would contribute to a better understanding and treatment of the food problem and to evolve planned and balanced agriculture.

S rice that is produced in this Province and the small quantity imported from other Provinces could not meet the cereal requirements of the population, other food-stuffs had to be imported and allocated to various parts of the Presidency. People who have never been accustomed to other cereal or millet but the intake of rice found it necessary, under the circumstances prevailing, to take to the consumption of cereals and millets like wheat, ragi, cumbu, cholam, maize etc. In areas where millets were generally consumed, it became necessary by force of some of the circumstances mentioned above, to distribute rice in their place with the result that millet-eaters became more and more reconciled to the consumption of rice. Wheat which is grown only in very small quantities in this Presidency was imported from outside the Province and distributed in many parts of the Presidency. People have taken to eat wheat and have mastered the technique of making preparations out of wheat. Before the war, wheat was considered as a luxury food meant for the mighty and the rich. Nowadays, it has come into

common usage with the masses. There is a demand every-where for wheat, though in small quaXtities.

Maize. Maize which was practically unknown to a high percentage of the population of this Province was distributed widely through ration and relief shops in order to meet shortage in cereals. People did not know how to prepare dishes out of maize. Sustained propaganda and threat of severe starvation succeeded in educating the population to try out maize. Nowadays there is a keen demand for maize from some of the areas which used to protest against its introduction. People have realised that maize is also a human food and that it has helped them to tide over a disconcerting food situation. Maize has come to stay in some parts of the country. It is, however, quite likely that maize might go out of vogue, if its supply is not continuous. It can, howecer, be stated with some confidence that in future, there would not be any regular opposition to the inclusion of maize in our dietary. Thus it can be stated in general terms that a good percentage of the population which was originally used to rice and rice alone has now become accustomed to preparations of wheat, maize, cumbu and other millets. From a nutritional point of view, this change must be considered as a change for the better. While it is true that there should not be any sudden or revolutionary change in the dietetic habits of the people, it is necessary that gradual changes should be effected in order to evolve a balanced diet if the general health of the population should be improved. It would thus be seen that the circumstances which brought about a difficult food situation in the country have also been conductive, though unconsciously and probably unintentionally also, to the introduction of unfamiliar and unaccustomed foodgrains into our diet. Consumption of a number of cereals and millets, not necessarily in the same meal, in the place of any one steriotyped cereal or millet would tend to the balancing of a diet. When the population is accustomed to any particular cereal or millet it is desirable that that particular cereal or millet XXXIXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX should form the major portion of the cereal or millet ration. But if a portion of the favoured cereal or millet ration is substituted by another grain, the cereal or millet portion of the diet becomes more useful. This is what has actually happened during the last few years, though under stern protest and serious misgiving from the public.

Milk and milk products. Milk is XXX almost the perfect food Nature has so far revealed to us. One sees everywhere a definite tendency on the part of all to increase the consumption of milk. Butter-milk which was formerly the monopoly of the richer and the orthodox classes of the population has now permeated the masses and is attracting their attention. Its distribution is now more widely relished than before. It, is, however, doubtful if the total production of milk is more than what it was a few years back. The result appears to be that those who are normally accustomed to a greater consumption of milk have to be content with lesser quantities, though paying a higher price for the same. The enthusiasm for more milk and its products should be utilised fully and harnessed to encourage cattle breeding when the momentum is there. The distribution of reconstituted milk to schoolchildren has stimulated their interest in milk. Growing children, pregnant and nursing mothers require much more milk than what is available to them to-day. If India should have a population possessing sustained vigour and vitality all steps taken to produce more milk immediately are steps in the right direction. Without good milk to feed our children, they could not be expected to grow into healthy and useful citizens; without good milk to feed the pregnant and nursing X women their off springs cannot be healthy. That the masses have realised the advantages of consuming more milk and milk products and that their intake is becoming more regular are factors of great signifficance for the future prosperity of our country

Fish..

Fish. To those who are accustomed to eat it, fish is a source of very good protein and appears to be in greater demand.

Pulses. The total consumption of pulses is on the low side and it is desirable to increase their intake. The population has nowaddys become accustomed to the intake of variety of pulses.

Fats. I am led to believe that the consumption of fats in the form of edible vegetable oils in on the decline. Some of these oils which were formerly available for edible purposes are diverted in large quantities for manufacture of soaps with the result that there is a fat shortage in almost every ordinary diet. Even before the war the level of consumption of fats was not satisfactory. I should think it is more unsatisfactory now. Fortunately there is a tendency now-a-days to consume groundnuts. To a certain extent hhis improves the quantitative intake of fats by the population.

Vegetable and Fruits. In the ancient past, green leafy vegetables were in common and almost in daily use in every one of the families in this country. During the recent past they fell out of fashion having been replaced by what are known as English vegetables like cabbage and Cauli-flower. With knowledge of nutrition spreading amongst the population there is an increasing tendency to re-introduce keerais in our dietary. This is a very desirable change in our dietetic habits. Unfortunately, the cultivation of keerai is not keeping pace with its greater demand. Any campaign for cultivating more of keerais in every available piece of land near our habitations should be encouraged to the fullest possible extent. Although the possibilities of increasing the intake of protective foods by educational methods alone may be limited, something can be achieved by a well-considered educational campaign which avoids the error of urging people to eat what is not available and which they cannot grow easily and cannot afford. The population must be gradually made nutrition conscious. Self-sufficiency in food is the first major item in the programme of national reconstruction. Vegetables can be cultivated without much effort. Leafy vegetables can be grown almost everywhere round our habitations and the various parts they play in regulating our health should be fully explained to the growing generation. The value of educative propaganda on the usefulness of vegetables cannot be over-emphasized. Children should grow on an with vegetables. They contain various salts and vitamins, which help digestion and assimilation of food. Their usefulness in preventing illness mfxfmmdxxxThmix and in promoting health should be constantly dinned into all receptive minds. Activities in connection with promotion of our ideal of self-sufficiency in food could well commence with encouragement of greater and regular cultivation of gree n leafy vegetables. Tomatoes are being raised widely in some parts of our Province and consumed in greater quantities than before. Tomatoes possess high nutrient properties and their greater intake is one of the desirable changes happening in our food habits.

If some of the welcome changes we notice to-day in the dietary habits of our people should be encouraged and consolidated, it is necessary that a steady stream of propaganda should flow in all direction. With the co- operation of the public and the Government, it is possible to evolve a balanced diet for the nation, a diet that should be within the reach of the poorest of the poor, a diet that should meet all the physiological requirements of a growing generation and a rising nation, a diet that should help us to face the future with courage and conviction, a diet that will mean health in body and mind, a diet that can be produced in our own soil and with our combined efforts.

(Sd.)

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
Abstract.

Government Servant Conduct Rules--Broadcasting--Talk in English on "changing dietary habits" by Dr. B.G. Krishnan, Nutrition Officer permission to broadcast and accept honorarium--Granted.

FIRKA DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

G.O.MS.NO.666 dated/6.10.48.
Read the following.

ORDER:

Dr. B.G. Krishna, Nutrition Officer, Firka Development Department is permitted to broadcast a talk in English on "changing Dietary Habits" from the Madras Station of the All India Radio on 9.10.48 and to accept ~~XX~~ any honorarium not exceeding Rs.25/- (Rs. twenty five) only that may be paid in this behalf.

2. In according this permission, due regard has been paid to the principle enunciated in F.R.11 and the Government are satisfied that the extra renumeration is justified as the work fells outside the scope of the normal duties of the officer.

(By Order of His Excellency the Governor)

(Sd.) X X
SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.

To Dr. B.G. Krishna Nutrition Officer,
Firka Development ~~XXXXXX~~ Department.
Copy to Accountant General, Madras.
Copy to Station Director, All India Radio, Egmore, Madras.

/True Copy/

OFFICE ASSISTANT
MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

C.N.V.
8.1.

No. 1777